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Foreword by  
Roger C. Parker, the  
bestselling author of  
*Looking Good In Print.*

# LOOKING GOOD IN PRESENTATIONS

## THIRD EDITION

**MOLLY W. JOSS**





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## **Looking Good In Presentations, Third Edition**

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*This book is dedicated to the men and women who, in whole or in part, make their living by creating and delivering presentations.*  
*And to my mother, for her efforts to make me one of the best presentations she ever delivered.*

20.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Molly W. Joss** is a freelance writer and graphic artist who has been writing and working in the graphic arts and computing industries for almost 20 years. She spends most of her time in her office writing or creating designs (multimedia and otherwise) or on the telephone talking to people about their work in these industries. When she's out and about, she enjoys traveling to companies and trade shows to find out more about computers and design.

In addition to this book, Molly has written two other books (*Clip Art Smart* and *Graphic Design Tips & Techniques*, which she co-authored). She has also written hundreds of magazine articles for graphic arts trade and general interest computer magazines. When her friends wonder aloud why she gets paid to play with interesting "toys" and then write about them, she smiles and says, "Somebody's got to do it."

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I must also acknowledge the following companies for the presentation artwork used in the examples: Digital Graphics, Broderbund, Microsoft, and Little Men Studio (please see the Resources list at the end of the book for contact information).

# FOREWORD

If you're one of those people who has avoided presentations to date, you'll find *Looking Good In Presentations, Third Edition* offers an invaluable guide to presentation success. *Looking Good In Presentations, Third Edition* provides a concise guide to the entire presentation process, from developing presentation objectives through translating them into meaningful visuals. It ends with tips for confidently delivering your presentation.

## **Presentations For Everyone**

*Looking Good In Presentations* is for you, whether you're facing your first, or your one-hundred-and-first, presentation. Newcomers will benefit from the step-by-step guidance it provides and its introduction to the tools used to plan and create presentation visuals. Experienced presenters will appreciate the straightforward, solid emphasis on the fundamentals of presentation communications. *Looking Good In Presentations* also offers experienced presenters a welcome opportunity to review the numerous details involved in creating and delivering successful presentations.

In either case, just one of the ideas in this book can make the difference between failure or success in your next presentation.

## **The Inevitability Of Presentations**

The appearance of *Looking Good In Presentations* is good news for those who have been informed that presentations are now a part of their job description—and this includes just about everyone! In just about every field, at businesses large and small, success and career advancement is difficult, if not impossible, without the ability to efficiently create and confidently deliver presentations to audiences of varying sizes.

Yet, although presentations are increasingly a part of everyone's job description, paradoxically, fear of public speaking is our Number One fear. More than death, more than job loss, people fear getting up in front of others and conducting a presentation.



By taking the fear out of presentations, by replacing uncertainty and insecurity with confidence, *Looking Good In Presentations* can make a major contribution to its readers' careers.

## **Message Over Glitz**

In contrast to all-too-many presentation books, *Looking Good In Presentations* consistently emphasizes a down-to-earth, message-oriented approach. I'm particularly fond of Chapter 2, "The Message." As the author writes: "Your audience needs to hear it—to hear, understand, internalize, and retain it." All too often, presentation books emphasize visuals that dazzle, but—unfortunately—often don't inform. You won't find that here.

The importance of making every word, every illustration, and every animation work to communicate and strengthen your message is emphasized throughout *Looking Good In Presentations*.

*Looking Good In Presentations* is a balanced book. It emphasizes the details as well as your presentation's "big picture." The tiniest nuances of onscreen typography and fine-tuning of business graphics is balanced by an emphasis of how the details affect the message you are communicating and the impact your words and your visuals will have on the audience.

Chapter 12, "Design Crimes And How To Prevent Them," is one of the most enjoyable chapters. It discusses and shows typical pitfalls and describes how they can be avoided. The numerous before and after illustrations and discussions of the changes made effectively drive home the lessons illustrated and help you avoid similar problems in the future.

## **Up-To-Date Information**

*Looking Good In Presentations* does not sidestep hardware and software issues. Although many readers will be preparing simple presentations for delivery using overhead transparencies or from the screen of a computer, the latter chapters describe how and when "presenter-less" multimedia makes sense and the special opportunities—and constraints—that presenters face on the World Wide Web.

*Looking Good In Presentations* includes several appendixes and resource lists. You can photocopy and use the storyboard sheets and grid sketch sheets for use as “hands on” partners when planning the development of your message and design of your visuals. The comprehensive Resource List will help you locate the right tools to do the job. The Glossary will help you quickly master the language of presentations.

*Roger C. Parker*

*Author of Looking Good In Print, Fourth Edition*

# INTRODUCTION

Most of the time people like to think of themselves as individuals with their own unique tastes, likes, and dislikes. One of the exceptions to this preferred self-concept is when people don't like to do something or are afraid of doing something. Then misery loves company.

If your hands get clammy and your heart starts to pound at the very thought of creating or giving a presentation, you're not alone. Stop a minute and let that idea come slowly into focus in your brain. You are not alone—everyone except the most extreme extrovert experiences some degree of panic when they have to create and deliver a presentation. Think about that the next time you're on a panel and everyone else seems so self-assured and confident.

## Tools For Presenting

Now that you know everyone else is just as uncomfortable as you are up on that raised stage, you can get beyond the feelings and start wondering how to make this task easier for yourself. There are presenters who didn't spend four years in acting school who do a wonderful job with their presentations. How do they do it?

One of the ways they do it is by reading a book like this one. This book is a systematic examination of the whys, how-tos, and how-not-tos of all kinds of presentations, including live presentations, multimedia presentations, and even Web-based presentations. Every chapter has information you can use, along with practical, immediately effective tips on making your next presentation more of a dream than a nightmare.

Another way they do it, frankly, is by doing it. Once you've read this book, I hope you will have enough confidence to start volunteering for presentations. That's right, I mean actually asking to get up in front of people and talk. With the basics firmly in hand and with this book as a ready reference, the more presentations you make, the better you will be, and your discomfort will lessen steadily. I promise.

## Presentation Types

This book covers three major kinds of presentations: live presentations; standalone presentations; and electronic, self-running presentations.

A live presentation is one where you or someone else is the main

component, while a standalone presentation is designed to run without a live presenter on hand to help convey the message. Several people can simultaneously access standalone presentations, such as those you see on large screen displays at public events.

Electronic presentations sent out on CD-ROM or available on Web sites have around-the-clock access and can pack a lot of information into a small amount of time. They can also be as long or as short as the person viewing the presentation wants them to be.

## **What Are Presentation Graphics?**

Presentation graphics are the visual elements that help convey your message, your information, and your ideas. They are the meat on the bones of your presentation. You need content and ideas to make any presentation come alive, but you also need to flesh out the presentation with presentation graphics.

For example, say you have a binder full of information about the buying preferences of your customer base. It's your task to present the most important part of this information to your sales representatives at the annual company meeting. Presentation graphics help you provide this information visually in a variety of ways, such as in the form of a pie chart, a few stock photo images, or even a multimedia show.

## **Who Makes Presentation Graphics?**

If you have a computer, you can make presentation graphics. Even students in junior high school routinely whip up a few graphics to add spice (and take up space) in their reports. If your twelve-year-old son or daughter can do it, so can you—if you want to.

Unless you were hired to create presentations, you may not like the idea of having to create your own presentation graphics. After all, you were hired to do a job that may have little or nothing to do with graphic design. You may feel that the illustrations are best done by a graphic artist or designer. Like it or not, unless you're running a Fortune 1000 company, creating presentations and presentation graphics are a de facto part of your job description.

If you're a graphic designer, you may want to expand your design services by taking on the creation of different kinds of presentations. Today, more than ever, these new kinds of presentations are likely to include multimedia and Web elements. You may also find yourself

having to work with a design team or even making a presentation about your design work itself!

In either case, this book will be helpful to you. It is filled with up-to-date information about the latest technology for creating your own presentation graphics, as well as information on how to get them onto slides, posters, film, and paper. It also contains current information on multimedia and Web presentation technologies, with particular emphasis on design and color.

## **Who Needs This Book?**

If you need to deliver a detailed message, this book is for you. The venue might be a sales seminar, corporate meeting, sales presentation, or symposium. Whatever the topic, however it is presented, you can learn from this book how to make your presentations more effective and how to take less time to create them.

In particular, if you need to create clear, effective visual graphics that bring text together with graphic elements such as charts, diagrams, photographs, and multimedia elements, *Looking Good In Presentations* is for you. You'll learn new information about type, color, and presentation design that will help you make the most of the time you invest in creating presentations.

What this book doesn't have is something only you, the reader, can contribute—your own stamp of individuality. As with any creative endeavor, a presentation is always more than the sum of its elements. It reflects the imagination and intelligence of the creator and presenter. All I can do in this book is help you learn the skills of creating and delivering better presentations. The real magic comes from you.

## **How To Use This Book**

*Looking Good In Presentations* makes some assumptions. For example, it takes for granted that you have some experience with a computer and feel comfortable using one. It does not assume that you have experience creating presentations or creating computer graphics. Although I mention specific software programs in the text, this is a software-independent design guide. You don't have to use, or own, any particular software to benefit from reading this book.

I hope you will take the time to read all of the chapters, although you don't have to read them in the order presented. Before you tuck

in and start reading, take a few minutes to study the chapters in the table of contents. Depending on your computer experience and presentation experience, you may want to skim some chapters or turn immediately to others. If you are familiar with planning presentations, you may find the chapters on design more interesting. If you need to put together a multimedia presentation, you may want to start with that chapter first.

No matter where you start reading, put aside time to read the entire book. No matter what your level of experience is, you'll find something that makes you glad you took the time. If you don't know where to start, the beginning is always a good spot.

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